

October 17, 2007

NJ State Board of Education – Public Hearing on Proposed Changes (NJAC 6A – Random Student Drug testing in NJ Public Schools)

Testimony from: John C. Graf, Jr. (Program Director – Pequannock Township RDT Program)

Thank you for again providing the opportunity to share information and my opinions regarding the proposed changes to random student drug testing policies and procedures. I would ask that you consider my comments as an extension of the testimony I gave before the NJ State Board of Education on July 18th.

The Pequannock Township School District has successfully begun our third year of the Random Drug Testing Program grades 6 through 12. As we have done since the inception of this anti-drug/alcohol initiative, the district's leadership reviewed the policies and procedures we had in place for the 2006/07 school year and instituted some modifications for 2007/08 which we believe has made our program more efficient and a more effective deterrent to student usage of illegal substances.

Given the national leadership position which New Jersey has achieved in the area of random student drug testing and the expertise which currently exists within the school districts of this state, I would suggest that the NJ State BOE use our collective experience to complete a review/revision process which parallels what has become the practice within our district. In addition to the knowledge which districts currently operating random testing programs can provide, a nationwide network of information is available to us through the contacts we have made with federal officials, public health advocacy groups and school districts from Maine to California.

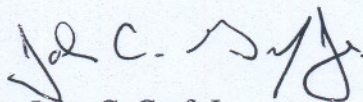
If we determine that areas of procedural concern do exist and that regulations are appropriate I would also suggest we follow certification or training models we already have in place. Like random drug testing, the use of the EpiPen and defibrillators are relatively simple efforts to protect the well being of the populations within our schools. We instruct people in how to use these pieces of equipment and could do the same with on-site testing equipment workshops. In addition, by pulling together the collective wisdom within the state regarding random testing procedures we can better serve districts contemplating the institution of a program. As Pequannock investigated the potential of random drug testing, we visited school systems with programs in place and now share our experiences extensively. If deemed necessary and worthwhile, NJ State BOE sponsored workshops could be held for districts at the start-up step. This practice could provide any district within the state the collective wisdom of the courts, the existing legislation and current RDT policies/practices already in place.

As I stated during my earlier testimony, since the inception of our program, "doing it right" has been both an ongoing concern and guiding principle for our drug and alcohol deterrence initiative. Because of the combination of state government action and efforts of the leadership of numerous school districts, New Jersey has clearly assumed a position in the forefront of random

student drug testing. Collectively we need to continue to “step forward” and maximize the potential of this powerful tool by pooling all of the resources within the state to address concerns and respond with decisions which do not hinder existing or evolving RDT Programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to share information with you today. I hope our experiences in Pequannock will help you address the important decisions you are considering. We stand ready to share the substantial expertise we have accumulated through any committee which you may convene to review ongoing practices and determine modifications which best serve the students of our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.C. Graf, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John C. Graf, Jr.

RSDT Program Director – Pequannock Township School System